



Vincentian Solidarity Office

December 2010 Bulletin

Comments from the Executive Director

Dear Confreres,

Let us climb the Lord's mountain!

I am happy to report on two more micro-project grants awarded by the VSO since I last wrote to you. These include micro-project grants for: the Province of Argentina as partial funding for a vehicle for the Seminario Medalla Milagrosa in Buenas Aires; and the Vice-Province of SS. Cyril and Methodius to purchase projection and sound equipment for the Parish Mission Team stationed in Kiev, Ukraine. It is the ongoing generosity of confreres contributing to the Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF) that enabled the VSO to distribute these grants. I am most grateful!

With the waning days of 2010 we close our celebration of the 350th anniversary of the deaths of St. Vincent and St. Louise. But like Advent, the conclusion of this anniversary year is really a beginning: a time to go forth and spread the charism of our founder with renewed energy and commitment. In this context I also renew my request for assistance with the Patrimony Fund Project. This project will provide resources for our confreres in developing regions to carry out our Vincentian mission for some of the most impoverished peoples. The VSO needs contacts for potential donors outside our Congregation who might be interested in contributing to this project. These can include family members, friends, and people connected to our works. All of these donations will be matched by an anonymous donor, up to \$5 million USD! Confreres can also participate in our efforts by including the Patrimony Fund Project in their wills. Contact information for the VSO can be found on the second page of this bulletin. Please join us in this great opportunity to extend our charism.

I wish you the peace of our incarnate Savior.

Faternally in St. Vincent,

Father Miles Heinen, C.M.

A Healthcare Program in Remalli

For several years the South Indian Province has brought healthcare services to residents near the town of Enikepadu in Andhra Pradesh State in India. Through this experience the confreres involved with the work, led by Fr. Sebastian Anthikad, C.M., acquired expertise in preventing disease and improving health among rural people. Employing this knowledge, and after conducting an extensive needs assessment in the region, the province decided to expand and relocate these healthcare services to a remote area called the Bapulapadu Mandal. The Bapulapadu Mandal has 28 villages clustered around the central community of Remalli. The villages are populated by over 83,000 residents who are mostly impoverished tribal people with little access to healthcare. The prevalence of disease and infant mortality is high in their villages. A potentially rapid and widespread growth of HIV-AIDS and tuberculosis currently endangers their region.



The new healthcare center

The South Indian Province sought the assistance of the VSO to obtain funding for the construction of the infrastructure and the start-up of operations for the new healthcare program it planned to launch in the Bapulapadu Mandal. The VSO obtained a generous grant from a foundation (that prefers to remain

anonymous), which it matched with monies from the VSF, to assist the province with these endeavors. The grant monies and matching funds enabled the province to construct a healthcare center, compound wall, and fresh water well in the Remalli Village. The funding also financed the purchase of an ambulance and is helping to cover the costs of the program staffing over its first three years.

The new healthcare program being implemented in the Bapulapadu Mandal addresses logistical and cultural factors that commonly impede rural villagers from using health services and prevention measures. The program is holistic and includes health education, nutrition, prenatal care, and hygiene. The program also utilizes home visits and involves local villagers to build trust and overcome cultural barriers. The healthcare center serves as a treatment and education facility, and residence for the program's medical team. The program is initially serving 10 villages and will gradually expand to all 28 villages in the Bapulapadu Mandal over the next several years.

Family-Based Development in Soloy

One of the works of our confreres in the Panamanian Mission of the Eastern U.S.A. Province serves the indigenous Ngöbe people. The Ngöbe live on a reservation near Soloy in the District of Besikö. The Ngöbe have a poverty rate of 98.5%. The average education level of Ngöbe adults is 3 years of formal schooling; malnutrition is nearly 60% among the Ngöbe. Their water sources are of poor quality. The Ngöbe are marginalized and have little political influence in Panama. The extended family is the basic social organization of the Ngöbe; a household can have as many as sixty members.

In response to this situation, our confreres, led by Father Joe Fitzgerald, C.M., worked collaboratively with the Ngöbe to create an integrated, family-based development program called Semillas de Esperanza. The program empowers over 100 extended Ngöbe families as protagonists of their own development through continual reflection on the local reality in light of Ngöbe values and a Catholic model of integral development. The goals of the program include increased food production (crops and livestock) and improved water quality. The program provides families with access to seeds, tools, small livestock, and agricultural education. It encourages the construction of latrines, rain water capturing systems,

wells, reforestation, and water management. The program employs local Ngöbe promoters to foster communication and collaboration among participants.



Working with new seeds in a program greenhouse

The VSO assisted in the financing of the start-up of the Semillas de Esperanza program (construction materials, seeds, livestock, tools and initial operational costs) and matched donations obtained by Father Fitzgerald from donors in the U.S.A. and a grant from the Sisters of Mercy International with monies from the VSF.

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Our goal: To assist the Congregation of the Mission with obtaining funds for its evangelization and service of the poor.

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